

❄ **THRIVE FREEZE**

The Honest
**Freeze-Dried Food
Buyer's Guide**

How much you really need · What shelf life means · What to buy first · Brand-by-brand

No sales pitch. Just straight answers from advisors who have helped 10,000+ families since 2018.

Questions? Call (832) 479-4428

Start here: the only 4 questions that matter

Most people overthink food storage. You really only need to answer four questions, and this guide walks through each one honestly — including when a cheaper option beats an expensive one.

1. How much food do I actually need?
2. How long will it really last?
3. What should I buy first?
4. Which brand is right for me?

Our promise

We make a small commission when you buy through our links — but we recommend the same food we feed our own families, and we will tell you when a better or cheaper option exists elsewhere. That is the whole point of an independent advisor.

1. How much food do you really need?

The simple math: plan for about 2,000 calories per person per day (a little less for young children, a little more for active adults). Multiply by the number of people and the number of days you want to cover.

Here is what that looks like in practice:

Household	2 weeks	1 month	3 months	1 year
1 adult	28,000 cal	60,000 cal	180,000 cal	730,000 cal
2 adults	56,000 cal	120,000 cal	360,000 cal	1.46M cal
Family of 4 (2+2 kids)	~46,000 cal	~99,000 cal	~297,000 cal	~1.2M cal

Tip: most freeze-dried servings are roughly 100-200 calories. To turn calories into servings, divide your total by ~150. The Thrive Freeze calculator on our homepage does this instantly — and maps it to a real shopping list.

Don't forget water

FEMA recommends one gallon of water per person per day — 14 gallons per person for a two-week supply. Most food brands ignore this; do not.

2. What “shelf life” actually means

“25-year shelf life” is real — but it depends on the food and the storage. Here is the honest version:

Food type	Typical sealed shelf life	Notes
Freeze-dried fruits & vegetables	20-30 years	Best-in-class; very low moisture
Freeze-dried meats & dairy	10-15 years	Higher fat shortens life slightly

Food type	Typical sealed shelf life	Notes
Grains, beans, rice (in cans)	20–30 years	Excellent long-term staples
Prepared meals / pouches	7–12 years	Convenient, shorter life than cans

Make yours last the full window

- Store cool (50–70°F), dark and dry — heat is the #1 enemy.
- Keep cans sealed until use; once opened, use within weeks to months.
- Avoid garages and attics with big temperature swings.

3. What to buy first

If you are starting from zero, build in this order. Each layer is useful on its own, so you are never wasting money.

1. Two weeks of the basics for your household (proteins, grains, a few fruits & vegetables).
2. Water and a filtration option (gravity filter or stored water).
3. Expand food to one month, adding variety so you will actually enjoy eating it.
4. Comfort and morale foods — a little coffee, dessert or a favorite snack goes a long way.
5. Scale to 3–12 months only after the essentials are covered.

The most common mistake

Buying a huge “1-year bucket” of food you have never tasted. Buy small, taste it, then scale up what your family actually likes. Variety is what keeps a supply from going to waste.

4. How the brands compare

An honest, plain-language comparison of the brands we see most often. There is no single “best” — it depends on what you value.

Brand	Best for	Honest take
Ready Harvest (via Thrivalist)	Build-your-own pantry cans, everyday + emergency	Great variety and value; our most-recommended for flexible storage
Mountain House	Ready-to-eat meals, camping	Excellent taste and convenience; higher cost per calorie
Augason Farms	Budget bulk staples	Low cost; more basic, more prep required
ReadyWise	Starter kits & buckets	Affordable kits; quality varies by product

Where you buy matters too: a brand with a better guarantee, clearer pricing and real reviews is worth a little more. We curate around those.

Your quick-start checklist

Print this. Check it off as you go.

- Calculated calories for my household and timeframe
- Two weeks of basic food on hand
- Water: 14 gallons per person (2 weeks) + a filter
- Tasted my food before buying in bulk
- Stored everything cool, dark and dry
- Added variety so we will actually eat it
- A plan to expand to 1 month, then beyond

Still have questions?

Talk to a real Thrive Freeze advisor — we will build a plan around your family, budget and region.

Call (832) 479-4428

or visit thrivefreeze.com

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